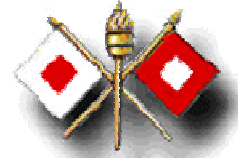


# The Desert Voice



31 May – 06 June 2004

## Commander's Corner

TIKRIT, IRAQ & AO DANGER – Another “balmy” week has passed by here in Iraq. No shortage of sunshine here, as the mercury hit the century mark and then some each day this week. However, the week was full of good news! From my foxhole, morale remains high, and the soldiers continue to do their duty in a magnificent way.

On FOB Danger here in Tikrit, we are no longer required to wear our body armor around the FOB. This change in the uniform policy was established last Wednesday. The senior officer on each FOB has been delegated the authority to adjust the uniform standards on their FOB. After four months of wearing the body armor everywhere most soldiers had gotten accustomed to wearing it. The first few days without it felt kind of odd. It is sort of like playing hooky from school. We're enjoying it, but we feel a little guilty for doing so.

Mr. Freeman was promoted to the rank of Chief Warrant Officer 3 by BG Morgan in the DTAC on 1 June. Congratulations Chief! It was a well deserved promotion. The Commanding General, MG Batiste, reenlisted SGT Warren from Alpha Company on the steps of the Tikrit Palace. SGT Warren will PCS to the home of the Signal Corps at Fort Gordon Georgia after the deployment.



*The MG Batiste reenlisting SGT Warren*

I'm happy to report that our R&R allocations have increased. We will have nine soldiers depart on R&R on the 9<sup>th</sup> of June, 30 more on 14<sup>th</sup> of June and an additional 34 on 29<sup>th</sup> of June. All of these slots will be filled even if those remaining here have to work additional hours to cover down on shifts that would normally be manned by someone on R&R. We remain committed to affording as many soldiers as possible the opportunity to take R&R. Additionally this month we will have 22 soldiers go on pass to Qatar, and 18 to Lake Dokan.

This week we tested our ability to conduct Video Teleconference with some of the Family Readiness Group leaders. While not perfect it was largely successful and we will implement a program whereby families can schedule time to conduct MWR VTCs with their

deployed soldier. Further details about this will be forth coming from the Rear Detachment.

Finally this week, we conducted “combat patch” ceremonies across the FOBs. All the soldiers have earned the right to wear the 1<sup>st</sup> ID soldier sleeve insignia for former wartime service. The combat patch worn on the right sleeve becomes a permanent part of their uniform and each soldier will receive a certificate of recognition authorizing them to wear it for their contribution to the Global War on Terrorism. Thank you for all your thoughts and prayers, it does make a difference.



*LTC Garrison presenting CPT Poston and Charlie company with their combat patches at the patch ceremony at FOB Danger*

## Alpha Company

Another splendid week has passed for Alpha Company. This week we pass the four month mark, 1/3 of the way through the deployment. The skies are blue and sunny and the dead grass is getting a deeper shade of brown. We've had a lot of promotions, a reenlistment, two new additions to the company and a lot of good clean fun. What never ceases to

amaze me is what's below the surface of the seemingly macho men of this company. They look tough and they act tough, until they think no one is looking.

This week's story comes from SEN team F11. Nestled quietly in a sandy field of dead brush, F11 can be found on fabulous FOB Speicher providing communications for the 701<sup>st</sup> Main Support Battalion. SGT Waldrop insists that when his soldiers aren't on shift they stay in shape by doing a proper amount of physical activity. SPC Poppleman, one of the F11 team members, is a large strapping fellow who likes to hit the weights in his free time. Or so we thought. Every evening about the same time, SPC Poppleman puts on his PT shorts and shirt and goes to the MWR building, telling everyone he's going to get pumped up. One evening, PV2 Moree, who happened to be at the MWR building, walked by the aerobics room and stopped to ogle the women in the aerobics class. Then he noted something strange. There appeared to be a 6' 2" woman in the back who was completely out of step with everyone else.

As he watched with fascination, he noticed during some of the kicking movements that the large woman in back apparently did not shave her legs. At this point Moree became excited. "A 6' 2" woman that doesn't shave her legs, I've found my dream girl" thought Moree. He sucked in his gut and tucked in his shirt to get it as tight as possible to show off his manly physique. Then he gave his hair a quick pat down to make sure he looked his best. He slowly worked his way against the side wall toward the back. As he got closer, he caught a glimpse of the large woman who had captured his eye and noticed the woman had large,

broad shoulders. "This is better than I could have ever expected" Moree thought to himself.

As Moree reached the back of the room, the class participants were all bending over doing their cool down stretches. Moree quickly thought "maybe to catch her attention I should goose her, that'll get us off to a good start." Moree stuck his hand out and gave his gargantuan beauty a pinch on the rump. He heard a very manly cry when he did so and jumped back, startled. Moree's dream woman slowly turned around. Moree caught a glimpse of what he thought to be a surprisingly square jaw. "Something seems to be amiss here" Moree thought. Then as his dream girl turned completely around, Moree shrank away in horror thinking "Oh God no." "Did you just pinch me?" Poppleman asked Moree. "I swear I didn't know it was you" Moree quickly replied. Poppleman was horrified. "How did you find out I was doing aerobics?" At first Moree was stunned he wasn't being pummeled for pinching Poppleman's backside. Then it came to him "I won't tell anyone you were here doing aerobics and you don't tell anyone what happened." "It's a deal" said Poppleman. "And by the way, I don't really swing that way, but let me give you the number for CPT Kevin Steyer, over at HHC. I think you guys might have a lot in common."



*(kneeling)PFC Moree, SGT Waldrop (standing) PFC Blankenship, SFC Quentin, SGT Setters and resident aerobics expert SPC Poppleman*

The first day of the month is always a great day. It means we're that much closer to finishing the mission and it means PROMOTIONS. SPC Camire and PFC Eckert from Node Center 51 and PFC Collins from F21 were promoted to their present ranks in a ceremony here on FOB Speicher. Their team mates, wanting to ensure they didn't get overheated from carrying around the extra weight of their new ranks, doused them with 5 gallon water cans while they did push-ups. As a commander, I can tell you it's great to see soldiers looking out for each other's well being like that.



*SPC Camire, PFC Collins (receiving his certificate) and PFC Eckert*





*Our new promotees doing celebratory pushups while PFC Mullins, SPC Cecil and SGT Ford help keep them cool*

Meanwhile, over at the Division Rear SPC Hercula at G6 was promoted to his present rank. He's been doing a tremendous job keeping the Assistant Division Commander for Support and his staff happy, which is a task too daunting for words, and we're glad to have him as part of the team. Not to be overlooked, also supporting DREAR is the illustrious SEN team F74. Attached to us from Bravo Company, SPC Prager and his crew have done an outstanding job, working with both our organic equipment and the commercial equipment we received after our arrival here. There have been a lot of unknowns and this team has remained open minded and willing to learn; two key traits in this environment. Two members of the F74 team, PFC Ewell and PFC Hart were promoted this week in recognition of that hard work.



*SPC Hercula*



*PFC Hart getting pinned by SPC Druckemiller*



*PFC Ewell and SPC Prager*

SGT Warren, from Node Center 50 at FOB Remagen, is the latest Alpha Company soldier to reenlist. Unfortunately I was unavailable at the time, so the Division Commander, MG Batiste performed the ceremony. SGT Warren received a tax free bonus and got his assignment of choice; the home of our beloved Signal Corps, Fort Gordon, Georgia. SGT Warren will become an instructor at Fort Gordon and will pass along to the new troops all of the experience he has gained in this nirvana we call Iraq. As long as he doesn't pass on any of the platoon's animal capturing experience, we feel it will be a good thing.

The two newest members of Alpha Company arrived today. SGT Harris is the proud father of a beautiful baby girl who goes by the name Skyler Ann. Skyler arrived a petite 5 lbs 14 oz and 18 1/2" long. It's immediately obvious she gets her good looks from Sophat. Mom and baby girl are in Fayetteville, Arkansas and doing well. SPC

Vogel also became a new daddy when Ross Vogel IV joined us today. He weighs in at a healthy 8 lbs 3 oz and stands 21 1/4" tall. Kristen and baby Ross are at Wurzburg hospital and doing well. We hope for the sake of both of these children that their mothers' genes are the dominant ones.

As you can see, the company keeps rolling along. With all this new rank we may be getting a little "top heavy". The only way to balance that out is to get some fresh faces. With all the new members of the company arriving, our Rear Detachment is getting a little too big. We're always accepting applications and we'll save a spot for you. The food is delicious, the accommodations plush and the view is scenic. I don't know what more you want me to tell you to get you on the plane. Wish you were here, XOXOXO

## **Bravo Company**

Greetings from FOB Warhorse!! It has been a great week for us. I hope all of you had a great Memorial Day, to kick off the summer. Although we did not get a chance to have our own BBQ, we all wanted to be back at home grilling away to welcome in the summer. We started the week with great news about the birth of Ashton Cole son of SPC Eleanor Yarley and PFC John Yarley. All of us here want to congratulate the Yarley's on the birth of their son. I am told that mother and child are doing great.

The company attended a Memorial Day Service that 3BCT had conducted. It was a very nice ceremony honoring those that have gone before us. Unknown to all of us, we had some B CO representation in the ceremony,



when SPC Ramona Barron sang “America the Beautiful”. She did an outstanding job and received a well deserved round of applause.



*SPC Barron before performing*

We also started out this week with some very important promotions. We promoted SGT Reed to SSG, SPC Graves to SGT, PFC Dowling to SPC, and PFC Moore to SPC. We also traveled to FOB Gabe to see everyone at F33 and B63, and we swung through Anaconda to see NC22 and F31. It was great to be out seeing everyone. Everybody is working hard and they all miss and want to see their loved ones.



*SGT Reed getting pinned*



*SGT Graves receives his new rank*

We also had a little down time to catch up some much needed training. Although there is a very low threat of chemical use, it is

always good to continue to train even if it is in the heat.



*All geared up*



*This is so fun*

We even had time to enjoy a little wildlife this week. We often see sheep, goats, cows and donkeys, but it is rare that we see some geese.



Well that is enough of my ramblings for this week and because I was told you wanted to see more of them, so here are some more pictures for everyone to enjoy.



*From right to left: SGT Sanchez, SSG Johnson, and 1LT Kato.  
“I love this stuff”*



*PFC Simpson, SSG Reed and LT Bagocsi*



*PV2 Abernathy*



*PEEK-A-BOO*



*Just hanging out*

Once again, I would like to thank everyone for their tireless support, it is appreciated by all. Take care and have a good week.

## Charlie Company

Greetings from Charlie Rock! As the temperature continues to climb so does morale in beautiful



Tikrit, Iraq. Morale has risen for a number of reasons this week. The main reason that morale has dramatically improved is because all of the soldiers on FOB Danger are no longer in their BRO Gear. As the temperature has begun to dwell in the 100s, this was a welcome change.

Charlie Company kicked off the week by celebrating Memorial Day weekend. While most folks would celebrate memorial day weekend with the day off and a BBQ, the soldiers of Charlie Rock celebrated with a 5 km run in honor of all the service men and women who have paid the ultimate price for our freedom.



*Charlie Company before the run and after.*

Charlie Company also had the privilege of promoting a number of deserving NCOs and soldiers on the 1<sup>st</sup> of June. These deserving soldiers were promoted to the following ranks:

SGT Shipley to the rank of Staff Sergeant

SPC Robles to the rank of Sergeant

PFC Lopez to the rank of Specialist

PFC Pierce to the rank of Specialist  
PFC Crosshall to the rank of Specialist  
PV2 Felder to the rank of Private First Class  
Specialists Johnson and Stadtler were also awarded the Army Accommodation Medal for their outstanding communications support during combat operations near Fallujah.



*The promotees and awardees.*

Charlie Company also had the distinct privilege of reenlisting another soldier in the Army. SPC West reenlisted in the US Army for four more years with a follow-on assignment (after her tour in Iraq) at FT Carson, Colorado. SPC West is the company NBC specialist and has done a fine job with all of the company's NBC operations.

The company has also started a new initiative to fight off complacency and reinvigorate the soldiers and supervisors in the unit. We now have an exchange program where the LEN platoon and NC53 exchange soldiers each week. This allows soldiers from both platoons the opportunity to learn about the other platoon's equipment and opportunity to meet and work with other teams within the company.



*SPC Smith (L54) and SPC Taylor (NC53) enjoying the C Company exchange program.*

This week also began the company's change of command inventories. The soldiers and NCOs have worked hard to ensure that the incoming commander, CPT Longwill, has the opportunity to see all of the unit's assigned equipment before taking command.

Everyone continues to work hard in order to accomplish our mission here in Iraq and to ensure that we are not becoming complacent in our jobs. Please continue to remember us in your thoughts and prayers. CHARLIE ROCK!

## HHC

Good day to you all out there. First of all I must inform you that this week has been different down here for all of us at TF Danger. First off with this week we had a Memorial day run where around 400 people ran the 5k run at FOB Danger. HHC had about 50 participants in the event. Here are some pictures of them running.



*Here is SGT Randolph coming to the finish line.*



*Here is SPC Velez making her finish in style, sunglasses and all.*

Here is a group picture of most everybody that participated in the "Danger Dash"



*Back Row: CSM Butler, CPT Romanowski, SPC Velez, CPT Steyer, 1SG Cromartie, PFC Hawkes, SGT Quentin, SFC Lehman, CPT Miller, SGM Vandertie, SGT Lopez, and SGT Molina. Middle row: SSG Perez, SGT Smith, J, SGT Randolph, PFC Laufer, PFC Giger, PFC Burns, SSG Gallagher, PFC Santiago, SPC Grinage, SFC Bard, SSG Stotler, SGT Rosado-Garrison, and SSG Dunkle. Front Row: CPT Tobias, SPC Whitehead, PV2 Owens, SGT Briggs, SFC Vinson, SPC Salazar, SPC Williams, SPC Sutton, and CPT Christensen.*

On Tuesday, 1 June 2004 we promoted SPC Smith and SPC Alba. Congratulations to both of them well deserved.



*SPC Smith getting promoted.*



*CPT Steyer presenting SPC McNamee receiving an Army Achievement Medal. Next, SPC Growden also received an Army Achievement Medal for outstanding work and effort.*



*CPT Steyer presenting an Army Achievement Medal for outstanding work to SPC Growden.*

I bid you farewell with this departing picture of the sunset in Iraq. Tough 6 out.



## **A/115th SIG**

Alpha Company of the 115<sup>th</sup> Signal Battalion kicked off this week at Forward Operating Base Danger with the Memorial Run. Four Alpha Company soldiers took part in the 5K, with one top 10 finish. Representing Alpha Company were: Staff Sergeant Marty Jones, Sergeant Kevin



Brown, Sergeant Terry McCullar, and Specialist Sherman Jenkins. Sergeant McCullar ran the route in 20 minutes 12 seconds to become one of the top 10 runners out of over 500 participants.

Sergeant McCullar has been a long time member of the Alabama National Guard, with all 30 years spent in the 115<sup>th</sup> Signal Battalion. The recent run at FOB Danger was just one of many he has taken part in during his National Guard career. In fact, he has taken part in a total of 30 marathons – 15 as part of the Alabama National Guard marathon team. In addition, he was a member of the state of Alabama's marathon team for 10 years.

According to Sergeant McCullar, the course here at FOB Danger was “tough ‘cause it had a bunch of hills. I’ve never ran a race that finished uphill before.” The winner of the 5K finished in just over 17 minutes. Sergeant McCullar says that “10 years ago when I was 42 (years old) I ran a 17...10 years makes a lot of difference.” At home in North Alabama, Sergeant McCullar is a tool and dye maker. He says he began running because he “just wanted to see how it felt to do a 26 miler (marathon).”

The recent 5K Memorial Run is the latest in a string of competitions here at FOB Danger in Iraq. Alpha Company of the 115<sup>th</sup> Signal Battalion has made a good showing at each, including several top place finishes. The National Guard soldiers are proud to represent the state of Alabama here in Operation Iraqi Freedom II, not just in signal – but in everything they do.

*Specialist Sonya Harris  
3 June 2004*



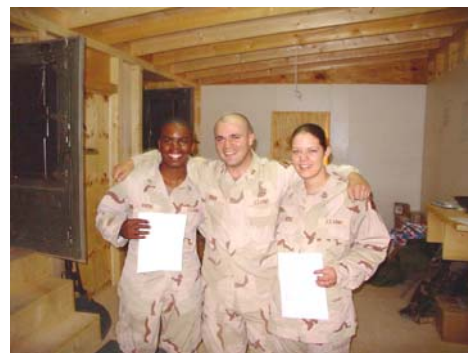
*SPC Sherman Jenkins, SGT Kevin Brown, SSG Marty Jones, and SGT Terry McCullar*

### **C/711th SIG**

Hello again from Tikrit Iraq. This week Charlie Company 711 Signal finally got to promote some of its soldiers! PFC Stuckey, PFC Wheeler, PFC Aikens Jennifer and PFC Aikens Clarence ALL got promoted to SPC/E-4. Congratulations!



*SPC Wheeler and SPC Stuckey*



*SPC Aikens 1 and 2*

Node Center 14, with the help of their friends and military family, have built an addition to their operations center. SSG Newton from Co A, 115 Sig Bn was a BIG contributor with his expert carpentry skills. We couldn't have done it without him and he taught our guys lots of good stuff! So wives, when your husbands come home.....



*Ops room in progress*



*Ops room (SGT Smith in NC)*

Node Center 14, on FOB Danger, also got to participate in the “Danger Dash” a Memorial Day, 5K Race sponsored by the Big Red One! We had nine participants who had to admit that after the run they actually enjoyed it and had a good time. Our brave representatives were SFC

Bodiford, SFC Green, SSG D'Andrea, SGT Lyon, SGT Weeks, SGT Milan, SPC Eckman D, SPC Adams P and SPC Leddick.



**NC 14 5K Race Participants (-Leddick)**  
And not to go without notice, SFC Heard was our proud supporter and photographer!

All our soldiers miss their families and friends, but we are lucky to have such great support. Keep sending letters and packages! Everyone smiles when the afternoon mail comes in!

## **B/125th SIG**

To start this article, I would like to have all of you reference last week's article which described the fortifying of our living area on our Forward Operating Base, because this past week we suffered the largest, most violent explosions on the Kirkuk Air Base that I, personally, have ever witnessed anywhere! We were literally sitting ringside for the largest fireworks display ever seen since the invasion of Iraq. Luckily, no one was injured, but I have never seen people run like they did that night in sheer fear of their lives.

It all began late one evening this past week as the anti coalition forces in Iraq showed their on-going desire to be rid of us by launching rockets into our camp. Those rockets, luckily not hitting anyone, or anything, started a grass fire that quickly grew out of control and went into the ammunition holding area where we had been storing old Iraqi

munitions. Since I spent the majority of the night huddling in my armored vehicle this is the story of what happened from my perspective.

We were just returning from work late one evening. As we downloaded gear from our vehicle, and sipped some near beer we witnessed the beautiful flow of inbound rockets streaking across the sky. Since they were clearly not going to hit us we continued to sip our near beer and chat. After draining the last of my fine beverage, I moved to my room, changed into my workout gear, lit my candles and incense, and began reading my favorite novel.

After a few minutes of relaxing, a large boom shook the room and the entire area started shaking. Quickly running outside, I noticed SPC Jeffcoat, SPC Parker, and SGT Camacho quickly fleeing to the bunkers stating, "That's a big one, sir!" I strolled around the corner and noticed a huge white mushroom cloud blossoming up into the air. A little concerned, I looked around and noticed PFC Duran and SPC McBurney on top of a vehicle taking pictures. SGT Knaus was yelling at them to get down and take cover when they calmly explained that they had been told this was about to happen and had moved back to our sleep area to take pictures. A little less concerned I moved over to the vehicle to use the car phone and get an update.

While small explosions continued behind the sleep area, we worked to get accountability of all of our soldiers and to get a picture of what was occurring. We contacted the company CP and PFC Pullins answered the phone and quite professionally reported that she thought the sleep area had been destroyed. I politely told her

that I was pretty sure that was an inaccurate report and for her to contact everyone and let them know we were okay. While I sat in my up armored vehicle with my bare legs dangling out, 1SG Lemasters came up to report that he had checked all of the containers and they looked empty and everyone was in a bunker.



**SGT Knaus, SPC Cusimano, SPC Pele, SPC Butler and SPC Long finding safety from the explosions on FOB Warrior.**  
SGT Crumbly, always a source of inside information, came over to report the entire situation as reported from his many Air Force and contractor friends. Other people were just outside, watching, joking and taking pictures. It seemed like the danger was over.

Suddenly, the entire night lit up, and it looked like the sun was rising. I stuck my head out of the vehicle and looked right at large orange mushroom cloud growing into the sky. A heart-stopping boom followed by a wall of dirt and debris ripped out of the blast



area toward us. People started running and were knocked to the ground by the blast. 1SG, screaming "I'm out of here!" took off for the bunker. I, not wearing any gear, decided the vehicle was



my safest refuge and struggled against the blast to finally close the door. Soldiers began running away from the area and the Air Force was screaming over the loud speakers to "Flee!" Explosion after explosion continued to rip through the area and shrapnel began to pour down like rain on the top of the vehicle.

I quickly called the Brigade Tactical Operations Center to find out what was happening. They got my heart rate up by saying we were suffering follow on attacks. I was thinking "Wow, that really sucks!" when they rescinded and stated that it was only secondary explosions. Just as I began to think, "This doesn't suck to bad", a very large piece of shrapnel hit the roof of the vehicle and my thoughts went back to "This really sucks!" While thinking how dumb I was to leave my gear in the room, I noticed my body armor was on the front seat of the vehicle. Feeling my own mortality, I crawled across the inside of the vehicle, not an easy feat for a six foot four inch man and grabbed my vest and put it on and felt a little safer.

For the next hour, sitting in my armored vehicle, I sat and watched huge explosion after huge explosion rip into the sky. I checked in with the company command post and confirmed with SSG Mullins and SSG Burton everyone had moved to shelter. No joke, I watched people flee from the bunker to their rooms to get DVD players and sodas and return. Apparently, the desire for entertainment cannot be kept down. The Air Force continued to confuse everyone by announcing "Flee!", then announcing "Stay still!". I had a great view through the rear view mirror of each explosion. I called to the

SYSCON and let them know what happened. They did not seem impressed and went back to watching movies or whatever it is they do at night.

A few minutes later, our own liaison officer to the SYSCON, SSG Maldonado called to say he wanted his DVD back from some other soldier and would I intervene and asked what all the loud booms were. I called him a "jackass!" and hung up on him. I guess his feelings were hurt so he called back again a few minutes later to tell us we were on CNN and Fox News.

Concerned, I attempt to call to Hawaii and let the Rear Detachment and Family Readiness Group know that everything was all right. Because of an ongoing problem with DSN access, we had to get Node Center 62, who are established in the vicinity of Tikrit providing our link into our higher headquarters, involved to make the phone calls happen. SGT Burke and PFC Howell were the hero's of the night by placing the long distance calls back to Hawaii to let us update everyone on what was happening almost real time. The bunkers, from the updates we got later, were full of soldiers who genuinely thought we were under attack and probably did not know as much about what was happening to us as the rear detachment did.



*Viewing the flames from the new housing area on FOB Warrior.*

After a little more than two hours of nerve wracking large booms, we

decided it was safe enough to step out of the vehicle and attempt to let everyone know what happened. 1SG Lemasters came over and took over watching the phone and we moved around the bunkers to check on everyone and give them the story. Most of Headquarters Platoon was found in the first two bunker but all of Node Center 63 was missing except for SSG Brown. We found soldiers from every unit on post all over the place. We found a 1SG just roaming around who could not find his unit anywhere. Some Soldiers had fled TOWARD the explosion because the Air Force announcements were so confusing.



Worried about Node Center 63, we took the vehicle and began to drive around to get full accountability of our soldiers. We found a few soldiers that had been practicing Darwin's Theory of evolution by standing in the open filming the entire event. I will not mention names (SGT Brandt, SPC Nixon). They sold the footage to all the major news centers and are now rich, at least they better be since that was the reason they gave me when I asked them "What were you thinking!" as we pointed at fifty pound chunks of shrapnel laying everywhere. (kidding, they were only 5-10 pounds)

We found all of the Node Center soldiers at the other end of the Air Field. SFC Smith decided that away from the explosion was the safest place to be and had moved

his people as far away as possible between explosions. LT Langley was not to be found and we worried until we discovered that he had never made it out of this room and had decided that under his bed was the safest place after the explosions started.

Overall it was an interesting evening. Not a single person was hurt which was incredibly lucky. Shrapnel was scattered around the entire base. Windows were knocked out. Our company day room and C2 Node had its roof buckled. Air Conditioners were knocked out of windows and televisions screens were smashed. Entire walls on some buildings were caved in. All of that damage, but NO injuries, which was incredible. Overall the night of loud booms continues to be the topic of discussion around many dinner tables here in Iraq.

## Chaplain

When I was in the youth group at my home church, we had a guest come and speak to us. After introducing himself, he brought out a wide-mouth, gallon size Mason jar. Then from under the table, he brought out about half a dozen fist-sized rocks and carefully placed them in the jar until no more would fit. He then looked at us and asked, "Is the jar full?"

Immediately, everyone answered, "Yes!" So, without saying a word, he reached under the table again and brought out a pale full of gravel and poured it in, being careful to get it all the way to the bottom between the larger rocks.

At this point, he asked again, "Is the jar full?" Well, we weren't average teenagers, so we said, "No," figuring there was a point to all of this. Without saying a word, he produced a bag of sand and poured it in, again making sure it

made it all the way to the bottom between the rocks and gravel. After asking the same question once again and hearing a, "NO," from us, he produced a bucket of water and poured it in until the jar was full to the brim. Then we all said that the jar was finally full and he agreed.

The speaker then asked us to tell him the point of the illustration. One of my buddies said that it was that you could fit more into your life, even when you THINK it's full. "No, but thanks for playing," was the man's response. After a few more guesses, he let us off the hook and explained that the only reason he could get everything in was because he put them in the right order...the big rocks being first. We all have these "big rocks" in our lives. They're the things that must be taken care of first before anything can be taken care of. These big rocks are our families, our faiths, our educations, and our purposes. Make sure you take care of the big things first and everything else will find its place.



*Division Headquarters on FOB Danger.*



*Picture of the type of camel spiders we have here.*

## Soldier Spotlight



**Soldier Spotlight:** SGT Helder Molina

**Duty Position:** HHC/121<sup>st</sup> SIG DFAC NCO

**Forward Operating Base:** Danger

**Home State:** California

**Family:** Married to Heather and has one step-son named Adrine

**What he has to say about serving in Iraq:** From a person who grew up in a 3<sup>rd</sup> world country the perspective here is a little humbling and I am really happy to help out.

What would you like to receive in a care package: Beef Jerky, Cup of Noodles, Fitness Magazines and my two bulldogs!!



*SFC Vinson at FOB Danger*